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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM ★ LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO ★ PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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JUSTICE FOR HADI IS COMMUNISM

Under communism racist police terror will be forever buried in the trash bin of history along with the capitalist system that spawned it.

OAK LAWN, ILLINOIS, August 5—Over 50 multiracial workers and youth gathered in bold unity today in front of the local kkkop station to protest the racist beating of 17-year-old Arab student Hadi Abuatelah. Members of the international communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) proudly joined the ranks of the angry fighters, advocating for communist revolution as the only solution to capitalist state terror.

On July 27, Hadi and friends were pulled over by the klan-in-blue because the car they were in allegedly "smelled like marijuana." During the frisk that the youth were subjected to, Hadi took off on foot. Dashcam video as well as bystanders recorded three large Oak Lawn cops soon tackling him to the ground and viciously beating him with fists after he had already been subdued and handcuffed.

Hadi was taken to the hospital (under custody) where he was diagnosed with a brain bleed, a fractured pelvis, and a broken nose (CBS Chicago, 8/1). The kkkops as well as their racist defenders in the bosses' media and in the community have wasted no time attacking his character in the aftermath, smearing him as a "thug" and claiming that he resisted arrest and was in possession of a handgun.

As the bosses' racist and sexist attacks worsen against the international working class, we need to constantly ask ourselves what true justice for workers looks like. Seeing a few killer cops jailed and legal settlements may bring some solace, but this alone cannot stem the tide of capitalist violence. For that, we need the worker-run society of communism. As we fight for Hadi and so many other victims of this profit system, we call on all workers to join the fight for revolution!

Young workers refuse to back down from racism

There's a reason why in PLP we chant: "The kops, the kourts, the ku klux klan – all are a part of the bosses' plan!"

This evening's action doubled as an antiracist rally as well as a press conference. A handful of different reform groups attended the program, including an anti-violence mass organization where a number of PL'ers have been active for years.

Walking up to the front of the police station was like walking into a militarized zone. The kkkops had blocked off all entrances with city vehicles and other roadblocks, no doubt in response to another mass rally that took place a few days after the racist assault. Helicopters could be heard circling above, and we could feel the stares and hear the taunts from counter-protestors and racist "back the blue" types nearby.

But the leadership provided, mostly by young Arab women, refused to be intimidated. This area of the south suburbs of Chicago is home to many workers originally from occupied Palestine. They are no strangers to fighting back. Many correctly drew the connections from facing down racist forces here to battling against racist zionist forces and their U.S. imperialist backers in the Middle East.

At different points during the rally, the racist counter-protestors tried to interrupt speeches and chants with their own filthy messages attacking Hadi and us antiracists. Instead of backing down, Hadi supporters chanted and spoke even louder into the microphones, turning the speakers to directly face the racist scum and drown them out.

In barely an hour, we were able to get

out dozens of copies of CHALLENGE, while having good political conversations with new and old contacts. Our communist messages of multiracial unity and fightback definitely struck a chord!

Liberal bosses will never serve workers

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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SCAN ME

OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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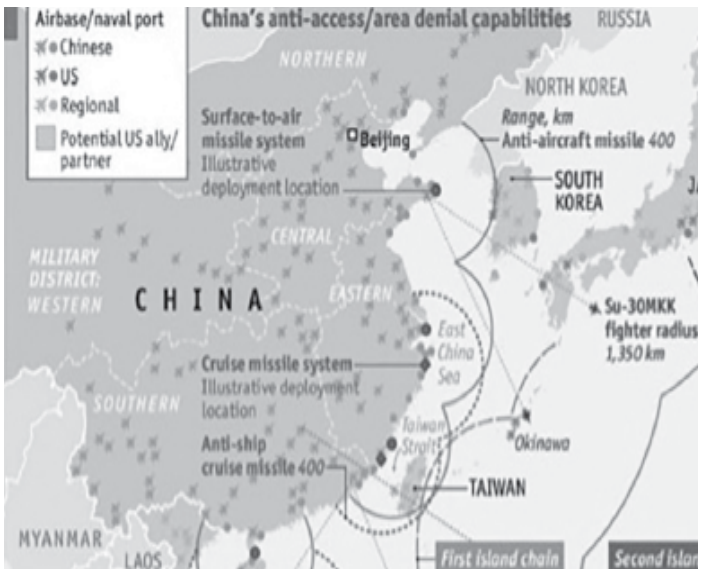
Editorial

Taiwan: a killer trap for the working class



China's defense capablities in the pacific show they have an upperhand againt U.S. in imperialist dogfight.

China's bold response to the recent visit to Taiwan by Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and third in line to the presidency, exposed the decline of the U.S. as a superpower, the rise of capitalist China, and a sharpening competition that will eventually lead to World War Three. Pelosi's provocative trip had nothing to do with the defense of "democracy" or the promotion of "freedom." In reality, despite disagreements over her tactics within the U.S. ruling class, it was a move to defend U.S. imperialist profits with a risky show of power. The workers of the world must have the clarity to turn inter-imperialist war for the division of the world into a revolutionary war for communism where the working class runs society.

The U.S. capitalist bosses know that China is the main threat to their imperialist dominance and the global military advantage they've held since World War II. But their actions in the face of China's growing influence, particularly in the Pacific, do not match their rhetoric. On the economic front, China has built the Belt and Road Initiative and the Comprehensive Regional Economic Association. On the technological front, it is in the forefront of artificial intelligence and quantum computing. Militarily, China has developed the world's largest navy. Its expanded nuclear forces almost rival those of the U.S.; in hypersonic weapons and other new technologies, China is out front. Where the current U.S. defense budget is flat, after inflation, China continues to raise its military spending by up to 10 percent each year (foreignaffairs.com, 8/10). President Xi Jiping has declared that China will become a "world-class power" capable of "fighting and winning wars" by 2049 (bbc.com, 7/28). As their recent military maneuvers demonstrated, they may be ready to move against Taiwan long before that point. Even before Pelosi's trip escalated tensions, a U.S. admiral predicted that China might invade the island nation off its coast by 2027 (nbcnews.com, 3/10/21).

As the U.S. tries to counter China's buildup with its Quad alliance with Japan, Australia, and India, imperialist war drums are beating loudly in the Pacific. It's up to the workers of the world to reject all of these criminal bosses and respond with international working-class unity and communist revolution.

Taiwan: inter-imperialist flashpoint

Taiwan has been an anti-communist haven since 1949, when Chiang Kai-Shek and his nationalist band of murderers and thieves fled there after being smashed by Mao Zedong's communist forces. The future of Taiwan is critical for both China and the U.S., the island's two biggest trading partners. The Taiwan Strait, as the main shipping route for "goods from Asian factory hubs to markets in Europe, the US and all points in between" (bloomberg.com, 8/2), is a linchpin for global supply chains. Taiwan manufactures two thirds of the world's computer chips and more than 90 percent of the world's advanced semiconductors, essential components for both industry and modern militaries (bbc.com, 8/8; sputniknews.lat). In addition, if China takes control of Taiwan, it "could be freer to project power in the western Pacific region and could possibly even threaten U.S. military bases as far away as Guam and Hawaii" (bbc.com, 8/8).

Today the U.S. promotes Taiwan as a beacon of "democracy" in a period when liberal democracy is failing left and right. In fact, Taiwan is a beacon of super-exploitation and rotten, anti-worker ideas. Its capitalist bosses have fostered a Taiwanese national identity to divide workers from their class sisters and brothers in China and throughout the world. The country's prosperity has been built on apartheid--the racist treatment of 700,000 migrant workers from Southeast Asia, who labor in unsafe factories and are exploited and controlled by third-party labor brokers (thediplomat.com, 10/10/19).

Taiwan's nationalist poison is a core part of the ideological arsenal to win workers to fight in the impending inter-imperialist war. The communist antidote is proletarian internationalism. Only a united, international working class can sweep away the imperialist, fascist forces.

U.S. imperialists in decline, China on the rise

The Chinese imperialists used Pelosi's trip to escalate their nationalist rhetoric about "One China" (elfinanciero.com.mx). Under the pretext of guarding its territorial security, the Chinese bosses moved their ships into Taiwanese waters and other areas of the South China Sea. Similar to the Russian bosses' invasion of Ukraine, these imperialist attacks only promote nationalism. They do nothing good for the working class.

Inter-imperialist rivalry inevitably leads to war. This provocation of the U.S. imperialists is one more sign of their desperation to contain the rise of China and their inability to weaken China's deepening alignment with Russia (jordana.com.mx, 8/17). Pelosi's trip also signaled the corruption within the U.S. ruling class. Pelosi and her son, Paul Pelosi Jr., met secretly with one of Taiwan's largest computer chip manufacturers. It's probably no coincidence that Paul Jr. "has the second largest stake in a related Chinese company" (thegatewaypundit.com, 8/15).

The U.S. bosses realize that time favors the Chinese in the inevitable military confrontation. However, Biden's off-script remark that the U.S. would defend Taiwan militarily against a Ukraine-style invasion revealed the lack of discipline within the dominant liberal wing of the U.S. ruling class. In this case, the U.S. bit off more than they could chew. China responded to Pelosi's visit with unprecedented and aggressive military maneuvers around Taiwan, including a simulated invasion that might accelerate their war plans.

As the decayed U.S. ruling class selfishly grasps at every chance to protect its capital and prop up its sputtering stock market, the Chinese bosses are grappling with a banking crisis that has left hundreds of workers in Henan without savings. A Chinese mortgage crisis threatens the economic stability and future of the middle class. But even as the stability so doggedly pursued by Xi Jinping is in danger, he protects his power with promises to the workers that the Chinese Communist Party—a nest of corrupt capitalist bureaucrats and profiteers—will solve the crisis. But the Chinese bosses long ago reversed the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and plunged the world into a dark night from which we are still struggling to emerge. They have nothing to offer the working class but exploitation, misery, and death. When workers turn the guns around, these bosses must be among the first to go.

The working class will end the dark night

Amid this escalation of inter-imperialist rivalry, workers in South Korea held massive protests against military exercises between South Korea and the U.S., demanding an end to the military alliance and the departure of U.S. troops. Liberal bosses will always turn to nationalism to mobilize workers to support their imperialist plans. Our Party must be present in these struggles to organize workers around communist and anti-racist ideas, and to inject internationalist class consciousness.

Amid rising racism, sexism, nationalism, and fascism, Progressive Labor Party stands as the future of the working class. We must sharpen the struggle to turn movements against imperialist war into movements for communist revolution. In the midst of the growing danger posed by rival capitalist gangs, we must maintain our unwavering trust in and dedication to our class. Our goal is to end this criminal system and build a communist world of social equality. Join us!✪

Rodwell-Spivey struggle

Justin released, fight to be free from capitalism continues

NEWARK, NJ, July 26—As a group of multiracial workers rallied outside the Veterans Courthouse on MLK Blvd., Monique Rodwell, the mother of the Rodwell-Spivey Brothers, texted the Rodwell Spivey Defense Team group chat. “Come up guys, they agreed to release him.”

After a year and two months of being detained and punished in one of the most dehumanizing ways on earth, the City of Newark’s prosecutor’s office temporarily set down its whip to release Justin Rodwell from jail. Our defense team of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members and friends have rallied around the Rodwell-Spivey family from the beginning in support of their decision to unite against police terror and in defense of every worker ever put under the boot of this racist, capitalist system. One of the first things our defense team did was invite the family to attend a kickoff to the PLP 2022 Summer Project, and now this year, we’re fighting side by side with a stronger relationship and more lessons learned.

Although the defense team called to ‘FREE JUSTIN,’ as long as capitalism rages on, no worker could ever be free. Not only does this system thrive on exploitation of our class—and the super-exploitation of Black, Latin, Asian, immigrant, and women workers—it also strips workers of our humanity through police terror and mass incarceration. Both are just another form of roping workers into wage slavery.

On June 1, 2021, the Rodwell-Spivey brothers were roped into the system's clutches when two undercover kkkops pulled up on and assaulted Jaykil (Supreme) Rodwell and Jasper (Kick) Spivey as they were talking with a street vendor outside of their house. Their brothers, Justin Rodwell, Branden (Bam) Rodwell, and neighbors came running to their defense. Kkkops called on their klan-in-blue for backup. A truckload of cops, from undercovers to suits, accosted and arrested all four of them. Bam, arrested the most aggressively, was tossed to the ground when he verbally refused to be arrested from behind.

Smash mass incarceration

After discovering that one of the Rodwell-Spivey brothers’ public defenders was an ex-cop who was fired for planting drugs on someone, we spread the word like wildfire that we needed to fundraise for another lawyer. We shared the body camera footage with students from Essex County to Kingsborough College, started (and still run) social media pages, sent emails, and made calls to as many people as we knew. It helped exponentially that the story went viral on Twitter. For months we petitioned outside of a Home Depot, grocery stores, and on the ‘number blocks’ in Newark about the terror Black and Latin workers in the area face. Black workers shared their experiences about being roughed up by the cops, robbed, and duped to take pleas and sit in jail for years. On the day of the most recent trial, one man heard our speeches and chants outside the courthouse and ended up spending the day with us, telling us about how he was recently released from Northern State Prison and could tell the courts were trying to railroad the family over like they did him and countless others affected by mass incarceration.

Nearly 50 of us packed the court and showed proof that the eyes of the working class are on this case. With the sharp strategy of our collective, we were able to build our lives around the family and use a huge political event for our base to highlight these racist courts and pack them with an intergenerational, multiracial group of fighters. It was a lesson and a reminder that this system will never favor our class, from Newark to Colombia. In cahoots with racist public school administrations, politicians, welfare systems, and police, judges and court-appointed bailiffs exist to penalize and lock workers up as soon as we step out of line (see previous CHALLENGE issue). And to these historically racist courts and prosecutors' offices’ dismay, the Rodwell-Spivey family will not go at this harassment and terror alone. As long as anti-racist workers under this system can fight back, no worker will ever be alone.

Released, but not free

Justin may have been released, but that does not mean he is free. Justin and his brothers face prison time, with Justin facing the harshest penalty: forty-three years with no possibility of parole. All because he and his brothers dared to fight the police. As Justin, the Rodwell-Spivey family, and countless others in Newark still battle for housing, peace without police, and economic stability, the fight is far from over! Being targeted and harassed by these institutions under capitalism is an economic and emotional tax on our class. As the U.S. Marshals service functions, ‘Operation Essex Thunder,’ “the District of New Jersey and the New York/New Jersey Regional Fugitive Task Force once again used their multi-jurisdictional investigative authority” to target and arrest 34 Black workers in June (usmarshals.gov, 6/17).

With two liberal Black mayors, Newark’s Mayor Baraka and NYC Mayor Eric Adams, in office, this is fascism or betrayal and institutional stomping out of the working class by so-called liberals. On the heels of another week-long water crisis with a break in Newark’s water mainline, Baraka led a ‘Peace March’ and, in his speech, blamed parents of incarcerated workers for eruptions of gun violence in the city. But what Baraka and Adams will never say is that they represent the largest gang known to man, the United States government, and are sweeping up the pieces of the failings of bosses before them, all while blaming the workers for their complacency in the exploitation of our labor. But for their reign to live on, they must punish one working-class sector while pretending to serve their more loyal base of workers.

The only way to grant our class a true victory against this system is a full communist revolution. To get there, we need to actualize the potential of what we as workers can do as an armed mass movement, not by swearing into electoral politics and anti-working class rhetoric year after year. Many of us need to participate in antiracist struggles like these because struggle and fightback are the only way that we build and learn how to fight for a communist world where racist courts, judges, and prisons cease to exist. No amount of police accountability or bail reforms will work when it is the system itself that is rotten.

Next steps in the ring of fightback

Our next steps include petitioning and flyering throughout Newark and celebrating Justin’s release on September 9 on the block where it all happened. Although Justin is released, this system fails Black and Latin workers like Justin and the Rodwell-Spivey brothers en masse. And reforms like the decision to end cash bail reform in NJ only adapt the chains around our class’ necks. Justin is open to our politics and agrees that racist mayors and overseers like COs and street officers only look out for themselves and their capitalist bosses. Also, both phony politics of having identity-based representation and reform failed his family and will fail workers worldwide without an international working class revolution. Even when we are released from one form of terror, without communism, we will never be free!✪

Justice for Hadi:

Can’t quell working class fightback

Continued from page 1

Throughout the course of the rally, three main demands were brought to the forefront. First and foremost is that all criminal charges against Hadi be dropped immediately (he has been charged with one felony and two misdemeanors; his family has filed a counter-lawsuit). Second is that the kkkops responsible for brutalizing Hadi be fired. Lastly, is that Cook County State’s Attorney Kim Foxx press charges against the cops.

Although the bogus and racist charges against Hadi definitely need to be dropped and it’s always gratifying to see cops get the axe, we must be wary of trusting in liberal bosses like the Black “progressive” Kim Foxx to achieve justice. PLP has held from the beginning that it is the liberal Big Fascist (see Glossary, page 6) bosses who in fact present the greater threat to the working class, even over the open racists like Donald Trump and those who back him. These Big Fascists are able to use identity politics and the promise of minor reforms to disarm workers politically while they ratchet up attacks on us, often to a scale that exceeds what the Small Fascist types like Trump can achieve.

RUNNING FROM POLICE DOES NOT WARRANT SADISM
JUSTICE FOR HADI
FIGHT BACK AGAINST RACIST TERROR WITH MULTIRACIAL UNITY
JUSTICE FOR HADI
JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE
SMASH RACISM

We cannot forget that it was Kim Foxx who refused to prosecute killer kop Eric Stillman after he snuffed out the life of another teen, 13-year-old Adam Toledo in March 2021 (Block Club Chicago, 3/15). Both the courts and the cops ultimately serve the needs ofW capitalism, and work in tandem to attack and divide working people while protecting private property. There’s a reason why in PLP we chant: “The kops, the kourts, the ku klux klan – all are a part of the bosses’ plan!”

Communism will smash the bosses

We will never forget what racist kops did to Hadi, nor the sum total of violence that this racist capitalist system has rained upon workers from its beginning. The bosses may hold power now, but the growth of communist-led multiracial fightback will one day spell their end. Join PLP and help bring that day here sooner.✪

Tanzania: Cattle herders fight back govt land grab

Tanzania, June 6–Today, 700 Tanzanian security forces attacked four villages in the Loliondo district, killing and wounding many villagers. The people in the villages are of Maasai background and had gathered in the night to remove the markers that had been placed "to separate areas of human habitation from those reserved for wild animals (le monde 6/23)". The people in the area rely on herding cattle for their livelihood and are being violently evicted from their homes in Loliondo and Ngorongoro Crater to pave the way for an expansion of private hunting areas and elite tourism. Under capitalism, natural resources, like everything else, are for sale even when it means destroying the communities and livelihoods of workers, farmers, or in this case herders. We need a communist society where the wealth of the earth is utilized to serve the masses rather than sold to the highest bidder.

Local Tanzanian bosses serve imperialist interests

The attacks against workers in Loliondo expose once again how trying to make deals with the bosses will never stop attacks against the working class. The bosses' deals only last as long as they serve the capitalists. In 1959, the colonial British government signed an agreement with the heads of the Maasai tribe, giving them the right to inhabit the lands in Ngorongoro Crater at the same time as they violently evicted thousands from the neighboring Serengeti National Park. , Over the last 40 years, the Tanzanian bosses have continued terrorizing the Maasai with eviction as they broker deals with wealthy tour companies from the U.S., China, Europe, and the Middle East. These evictions today in Loliondo are paving the way for a 1,500 kilometer wildlife corridor exclusively for hunters brought by the Otterlo Business Corporation (OBC), of the United Arab Emirates. (Al-Jazeera, 6/16)

Bosses' phony environmetalism, herding workers out of homes

Environmentalism is also used as a cover by the bosses to continually steal more for themselves and justify attacks on their competitors and the working class. The Tanzanian government is covering up their land grab by blaming the Maasai for overpopulating the crater and threatening the ecosystem and thereby harming the tourism sector of the economy, but it is the OBC that is threatening the ecosystem by fencing in the animals so they cannot migrate, hunting and removing them to a zoo in UAE. They want luxury tourists to "enjoy picturesque views of nature… untouched by humans" (except them) and they appeal to the world-wide conservation and environmentalist movements to justify these violent evictions (roape.net). The new president of Tanzania, Samia Hassan, is their partner in crime as they make tourism a political priority. She recently starred in a wildlife documentary, "The Royal Tour,'' to attract the kind of capitalist investment that will further endanger Maasai communities.

The land and resources are controlled by the Tanzanian ruling class and protected by the bosses' state, in this case the government and the military. Over the last 25 years, large tracts of land have been leased by the government to foreign companies to grow biofuel or mine diamonds and other minerals. One entire island, Prison Island, off the coast of Zanzibar, was leased to a private foreign company to build an elite tourist hotel. The capitalist class that controls the government is enriching themselves at the expense of workers. This proves that whether a country is a democracy like Tanzania or an autocracy, the state is a dictatorship of the capitalist class.

Fight nationalist divisions with communist revolution

Influenced by historical tribalism, many in the working class in Tanzania view the Maasai workers as hostile and believe the government's divisive propaganda. It is up to Progressive Labor Party members here to mobilize workers and farmers who have no stake in capitalism to break down tribal divisions and build working class consciousness and a revolutionary communist movement for workers' power.✪

Fight for AC heats up, again! Residents choose CHALLENGE

Tenants protest sweltering building conditions last year.
Though building is cooler communist ideas are gaining steam.

Hyattsville, MD,August 22–Last year Friendship Arms residents were sweltering in the summer heat with no A/C. They petitioned, called the mayor and held an exuberant, noisy rally inside and outside of the building. The goal was achieved — air conditioning in the building's hot stuffy hallways. Friendship Arms is a subsidized building for seniors and persons with disabilities overseen by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Two residents of the building started reading CHALLENGE as a result of the Progressive Labor Party's (PLP) participation in this struggle.

Fast forward to summer 2022. No A/C in the hallways again! A PLP member works with Hyattsville Aging in Place (HAP), a volunteer, nonprofit organization helping seniors to stay in their homes and apartments. The PL'er called four residents weekly to make sure that they were safe. Once alerted to the dire air quality in the hallways, the PL'er organized calls to the City's code compliance hotline and reached out to members of HAP outside of the building to make sure the officers of HAP were aware of the situation.

HAP stepped up and encouraged the new mayor and council members to get involved. A signed petition that was sent to the owners of the building, LIHC, forced action. LIHC is currently being sued by family members who lost loved ones in the Bronx fire in January (see CHALLENGE, 1/22/) A lively tenants' meeting attended by the mayor and a council member showed how vocal and concerned the residents were. The PL'er regularly inspected the hallways and emailed updates to all. This built trust among the residents and put pressure on the mayor and council. Out of this struggle, another person started reading CHALLENGE and helped write this article.

Only with bold action and spreading communist ideas can we get rid of this capitalist system and put the working class in charge. Workers are the best ones to run society. Join Progressive Labor Party.✪

Part 12: Black communists in the Spanish Civil War

Thyra Edwards: antifascist thinker and fighter

This is part 12 of a series about Black communists in the Spanish Civil War. In the early 1930s the urban bourgeoisie (capitalists) of Spain, supported by most workers and many peasants, overthrew the violent, repressive monarchy to form a republic. In July 1936 the Spanish army, eventually commanded by Francisco Franco, later the fascist dictator, rebelled to reestablish the repressive monarchy. Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy gave Franco massive military aid.

In 1936 the International Communist Movement, called the Comintern, headquartered in the Soviet Union and led by Joseph Stalin, organized volunteers, mainly workers from more than 60 countries into the International Brigades (IBs) to go to Spain to defend the Republic. Black workers, especially Black communists, emphasized the importance of fighting racism to win anything for the working class. And they brought this antiracist fightback with them when they returned to the United States. They were building a movement they hoped would lead to communist revolution around the world. They succeeded in organizing millions around communist ideas and practices. But the movement believed that uniting with liberal bosses and fighting for "freedom and democracy" to defend the Republic in Spain would further the fight for communism. This was part of the united front against fascism, which resulted in only fortifying the bosses system and laid the basis for the corruption of the old communist movement.

In the Progressive Labor Party, we are against any unity with capitalists. They all have to go and the working class must rule: that's communism. If the working class is to seize and hold state power throughout the world, Black workers' leadership is essential. That is the only way our class can destroy racism, the lifeblood of capitalism. The following is a story of one such leader, Thyra Edwards.

Black, woman worker, organizer, and communist

Born in Texas in 1897, Thyra Edwards trained as a social worker, then as a labor organizer at Brookwood Labor College. In the early 1930s Edwards traveled to the Soviet Union. She declared:

The Soviet [Union] has made women free economically by giving them access to all types of employment. It has extended that freedom by freeing them from bearing children against their wishes.

It is necessary that [Black workers] in America give more attention to the Soviet solution of the race problem. The one thing is certain: that only in a Socialist society can [Black, Latin and Asian workers of the world hope for salvation and equality.

Sometime during the early 1930s Edwards secretly joined the Communist Party.

For Edwards, the Spanish Civil War represented the central battleground in the war against fascism. She went to Spain in early October 1937 to report on the conditions of Spanish children who had been evacuated from bombarded areas after their parents were killed.

Black women leadership builds internationalism

Before going, she declared:

> *"No force in the world today so threatens the position and security of women as does the rising force of fascism. Fascism degrades women.": we are not on an inter-racial, save the Negro crusade but rather on an inter-national commission concerned with freedom and democracy for all kinds of people. Just now the Spanish people happen to be symbolic of all the rest of us. And certainly there isn't going to be any freedom and equality for Negroes until and unless there is a free world.*

On October 20, 1937 she attended a convention of the National Assembly of Spanish Women against War and Fascism. When she rose to speak, about 3,000 women and children gave her a lengthy standing ovation as they shouted, with clenched fists raised, "Viva la Raza Negra!" Leading the ovation was Dolores Ibarurri Gomez, "La Pasionaria", a communist whose impassioned speeches helped to rally Loyalist forces. Edwards wrote:

> *It was an overwhelming and tremendous expression of solidarity with [Black] people and with all peoples struggling for freedom and full emancipation and education and progressive development. ... For in truth Spain is the battlefield on which all our destinies are being fought just now, and fought with such relentless courage and such clarity of direction.*

Thyra Edwards, standing opposite Salaria Kea, gave communist leadership in Spanish Civil War and beyond.

In Spain, Edwards discovered the limits of liberal capitalism when she asked whether the Republic would grant Morocco self-rule. Many Black Africans, called Moors: fought on the fascist side in the civil war. Franco, the fascist leader, was commander of the Spanish colonial army. A representative of the Spanish Republican government told her that they wanted help from France [they never got it], and France feared that if the Republic gave self-rule to the Moors, the same anti-imperialist demands would be made in the French colonies of North Africa. Capitalism, whether liberal or fascist, leads to nationalism and neither benefits the working class. Today the Progressive Labor Party fights for communism. No deals with capitalists!

After returning to the U.S. Edwards and nurse Salaria Kea (see CHALLENGE, 3/30) went on a tour of twenty-one cities to raise money for an ambulance to send to the Spanish Republic. Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, and Richard Wright contributed to the fund-raising campaign, Robeson making the first contribution of $250.

The publicity centered on Salaria Kea: A brave young Harlem Hospital nurse who went to Spain last year to do her bit in the world struggle against Fascism, returned on the S.S. Normandie of the French Line Monday, the rumble of guns still roaring in her ears and the stench of blood still in her nostrils.

Edwards wrote the booklet "A Negro Nurse in Republican Spain" about Kea.

A pamphlet titled "The Negro Ambulance Fund" connected the war in Spain to women's rights: "Fascism stands for the subordination of women. Mussolini and Hitler have established that women have one exclusive function: To bear children for soldiers for the State … Under Fascist government not only trade unions are liquidated but fraternities, women's federations, lodges, cooperatives, and peace organizations."

The ambulance was inscribed, "From the Negro People of America to the People of Republican Spain." On the speaking tour her lecture stressed the common interests of Black and white workers in their struggles to satisfy these needs."

Black boss, white boss, same rotten nationalism

Edwards spoke to many CIO union groups. She was red-baited by Black "company union" boss C.W. Rice. The organizers targeted local nurses and doctors. They received much support from the Association of Colored Graduate Nurses but got almost none from the conservative National Medical Association, the "Black AMA."Edwards had a strong class analysis:

In a message that touted housing as a "social right' and health insurance as a "state responsibility," Edwards praised the role of ladies' auxiliaries in recent sit-down strikes led by the CIO, and she noted that women had been shot down on the picket line a few months earlier in the Memorial Day Massacre outside Republic Steel's plant on the South Side of Chicago.

"… We had the fallacious idea that a black boss would be superior to a white boss when what we want is a democratic order with no boss with his heel on our necks."

In organizing for a conference of Black groups Edwards stressed a class, rather than a nationalist, emphasis:

> *… disagree[ing] with the decision to … ignore the issues faced by the black working class. "… [S]tressing police brutality against Negroes in Washington is narrowing the basic issue of police brutality and ignoring their attacks of workers on picket lines, in strike zones, hunger marches and unemployment demonstrations."*

Struggle in later years

During World War II Edwards taught about the Soviet Union. In 1948 she and her husband moved to Italy, where she helped organized the first Jewish childcare program in Rome to assist child Holocaust victims.

Edwards died of breast cancer in 1953. Thyra Edwards' life and contribution to the communist internationalism demonstrates that Black women's leadership is key to smashing racist capitalism and sexism to liberate the entire working class. Even the FBI, who monitored her work until her death, understood this and feared and attacked her and other Black communists like Claudia Jones, Paul Robeson. Now more than ever we must reject the twin dangers of Black nationalism and feminism, and carry the torch for communism as she once proudly did.✪

Sources: Gregg Andrews, Thyra J. Edwards; A. Donlon. "Thyra Edwards' Spanish Notebook"; Erik McDuffie, Sojourning for Freedom; Salaria Kea: A Negro Nurse in Republican Spain. (pamphlet) - https://alba-valb.org/resource/salaria-kea-a-negro-nurse-in-republican-spain/ Wikipedia article on Thyra J. Edwards

Harriet Tubman & John Brown, models of multiracial unity

Continued from page 8

against slavery — taking small steps to serve and defend those who had escaped slavery as well as those who fought it directly.

Join PLP

We invite all workers, soldiers and students who participate in these struggles to join Progressive Labor Party.

Today's supporters of antiracist struggle understand — just as did the thousands backing Brown and Tubman 161 years ago — that revolutionaries like the raiders then and PLP now are the honest, reliable leaders in struggle. When direct action is required, they know to whom to turn. CHALLENGE constantly reports workers being

won to militancy and multiracial unity in struggles against the racist bosses, hailing those joining our ranks. Step by step, the communist movement will grow and lead the working class to revolution and a new world based on members of our class mutually meeting each other's needs, without racist bosses and their profit system.J

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Down with Kingmakers & nationalism

During one of my last days of summer break, I went to see Lauren Greenfield's 2019 documentary The Kingmaker. We learned about the legacy of the infamous Marcos family, which has terrorized the working class of Philippines since the late 1960s. Following in the footsteps of the late, heinous Ferdinand Marcos, his son Bongbong—aided by his mother Imelda—campaigned for the 2016 vice presidency in an attempt to reclaim the family's power. Soon after his opponent Maria Leonor Robredo won, in Trump-like fashion, Bongbong protested the official count with no avail.

Amid the overlay of interviews between the director and various political figures, Imelda Marcos, and workers, the corruption and devastation brought by the Marcos family and their aids (including the state apparatus) onto the Filipino people gave me pause. Familiar things included misinformation through social media, replacing history and upending the education system, and dangerous cult personalities justifying the state-sanctioned terror inflicted on communities. I instinctively recognized the same tactics used by the U.S. ruling class and inferred that today's gruesome reality in the Philippines could very well be the near future of the U.S. as long as workers do not fight back and continue to let weak reforms misguide much-needed change.

After the film, we had a discussion that had an impact on me. Multiple workers from the Philippines spoke of their experience confronting intergenerational trauma and a lack of pride in the country on account of the horrific government. One person expressed deep frustration that in the Philippines, there is no reliable mainstream news source. They continued describing the racism they have experienced from non-Filipino and Filipino people alike. They recounted a trip to New York that was soured by workers in a Filipino store. Because of the language the person spoke—the same used by the Filipino government—they received an antagonistic response. It was clear that national and cultural boundaries isolated this person from those who are not so different, as we all have a common enemy in the Marcoses, Trumps, and Bidens of the world. People also went more in-depth about the martial law enacted by Ferdinand Marcos, permitting his administration to rule with an iron-fist and cement him as dictator for essentially 14 years. I also learned the causes of the large Filipino population in the U.S. (now understanding why I had many Filipino classmates and teachers throughout middle and high school). It was due to the complex and insidious relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines, leaving workers from the Philippines with alienation and resentment.

I spoke to my experience of recently broadening my perspective and analysis of systemic oppression beyond my community to the international working class and finding that an organized, antiracist, antisexist communist party is what is needed to tear down the crooked elite. Afterwards, I connected with multiple people, telling them of my work within the Baltimore West Wednesday Coalition to achieve accountability of police murders and described the Progressive Labor Party. Since the place that hosted the event is close to home, I intend to remain in touch and make inroads to building greater class consciousness among organizers.

★★★★★

Top Gun: Maverick, recruitment tool

According to a recent article by William Koehler on MovieWeb, films that want access to aircraft carriers, fighter jets and skilled pilots need to get approval from the Department of Defense (DOD). In the first installment of Top Gun in 1986, "the US Navy saw a 500 percent increase in the number of people joining to be naval aviators." They even had Navy and Air Force recruitment booths in some theaters showing the movies.

The DOD also has final say on the script, so if it's not pro-U.S. military, it doesn't get in the movie. Top Gun: Maverick concentrates on a combat mission to destroy an enemy target, an Iranian nuclear facility. The film assumes the U.S. government and its military are doing the right thing because there is no discussion about the political or historical ramifications. It glorifies the military and "the best in the world pilots," who will uphold

U.S. imperialism at any cost. Propaganda films like Top Gun influence youths to join the military to do something heroic. The high tech killing machines are used to make warfare look "cool."

But the reality is much different. The reality is that the bosses use the military to kill our sisters and brothers all over the world to ensure their blood profits. We must make it clear that the bosses use entertainment to weaponize their imperialist goals at our expense. Let's build a communist alternative, join PLP!

★★★★★

Weakening U.S. desperate for old world order

"The U.S. economy is based on profits from control of an imperialist empire of more than 750 military bases in over 100 countries and a military budget that dwarfs every other country (12 times larger than Russia's). It provides 80 percent of the world's weapons exports including military training to 40 of the most oppressive, anti-democratic governments on earth" (Jeff Cohen – Veterans For Peace, Summer 22).

The purpose of Nancy Pelosi's Southeast Asia tour and recent "we got your back" message to Taiwan (see editorial, page 2) is to pledge protection against China and security for more billion dollar arms sales and military training not only to Taiwan but to Japan, Australia and South Korea to set up a Southeast Asian imperialist bloc to oppose Chinese economic expansion just as NATO's imperialist bloc aims to prevent Russia's expansion into Europe.

Joe Biden's recent visit to Saudi Arabia had more to do with multi-billion profits for Raytheon and Boeing's sales of missile systems and fighter planes to protect U.S. oil interests in the Middle East than any increase in oil production.

When U.S. imperialists scream about a return to "world order" and "democracy" they mean return to U.S. empire rule. The media flood of old and new U.S. war movies and how atomic bombing of Japan saved the U.S. are military propaganda. The military presence and nationalist flag waving at all events are really demands for worker's blood to be shed once again to defeat U.S. capitalist competitors. I believe however that the worldwide working class can turn the next imperialist profit war into a class war for a communist system of equality and worker's power that will smash racist capitalism. Join PLP!

★★★★★

Remembering Camacho & Delano Summer Projects

Two Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members attended the memorial for Epifanio Camacho, longtime PLP member and leader in the Central Valley in California, a major agricultural area populated by large numbers of immigrant farm workers from many different countries.

Like many other (then) younger Party members, I participated in the Delano-McFarland PLP Anti-Racist Summer Projects, which took place between 1984 and 1990. Volunteers lived with local PLP members, almost all of whom were farmworkers. In the summer, farmworkers labored in 100 degree plus weather, frequently wrapping themselves in layers of clothing for protection from the toxic pesticides used by the growers in order to maximize their profits. We frequently went to the fields early in the morning to reach farmworkers with CHALLENGE and flyers from the Anti-Racist Farmworkers' Union, which was led by PLP and the International Committee Against Racism (InCAR). In the late afternoons, we would go door-to-door in areas where farmworkers lived. PLP and InCAR led numerous marches and rallies through these neighborhoods on the weekends or late afternoons. During the projects, which usually lasted over six weeks, intense political discussion and activity planning took place at regular Party meetings.

One day, the volunteers were invited to come to Camacho's house. This was the first time I had the chance to meet him. Both physically and intellectually powerful and politically sharp as nails, I could see why bringing workers like Camacho into PLP was so important to the growth and development of our revolutionary communist movement.

At Camacho's memorial, I spoke on behalf of PLP. I first read two tributes written by PLP comrades from Mexico (see CHALLENGE, 8/17). I then read my remarks. This is a part of what I said:

[Camacho's] greatest contribution to our movement was to show that PLP was and is serious about the working class leading society. We think he understood from his own personal conversion that the process of that transformation required deep immersion in the class struggle. He led that fight with a fiery spirit second to none. [He] was an invaluable member of our class, our communist party and the worldwide movement to abolish capitalism, end exploitation and wage slavery and establish a worker-run and worker-led communist society. Rest in power, comrade Camacho!

Several of the people who participated in the Memorial spoke eloquently about their own experiences as young people volunteering in the Summer Projects. They testified emotionally about the profound impact the experiences had on them during their formative years, and how those events had shaped their future lives.

My comrade and I had a long, in-depth discussion with one of the members of a family I stayed with in 1989. Although he is no longer a member of PLP, our conversation made it clear that he is still a communist at heart. He described in great detail some of the militant actions the Party led, and the importance of having a mass base in the working class. At one of those actions, a cop who wanted to shut down the action radioed headquarters for approval. He was told, in no uncertain terms, that it would not be a good idea given who the cops were up against, i.e. PLP and militant, antiracist members of the working class.

In discussing this memorial with a comrade afterwards, I realized what a privilege it had been to be part of the celebration of the life of this wonderful comrade! Epifanio Camacho may be gone, but the fruits of his communist labors continue through all of us who took part in the PLP's work in the Central Valley and way beyond.

★★★★★

GLOSSARY

COMMUNIST TERMS

Fascism

Capitalism's response to a crisis of their system, when the bosses can no longer sustain the charade of liberal democracy and resort to more direct control and state terror instead. Fascism is marked by the ruling capitalists disciplining their own ranks to serve the urgent needs of the capitalist state and weather the crisis. To defend their system from internal and external threats, they use all the means available in their state apparatus, including violence. To build unity within their class and loyalty from workers, they rely on nationalist politics and calls for sacrifice. Their strategy is to mislead the working class to kill our working class sisters and brothers in the next

inter-imperialist war.

Big Fascists

The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalist faction of the U.S. ruling class. They represent the wealthiest and most powerful bosses in the U.S., including multinational banks like Chase and Citibank, multinational oil companies like ExxonMobil, the big automakers, Boeing, Amazon, and the major media companies. As the dominant grouping since World War II, the Big Fascists were the architects of the liberal world order with the U.S. bosses on top. Their dominance rests on U.S. financial and military power and its strategic control of the Middle East and the flow of oil to Europe, Asia, and Africa. To sustain this dominance, they need to rebuild a huge, multiracial military for inter-imperialist war,

most likely with China.

Small Fascists

The Small Fascists are a group of domestically oriented U.S. capitalists who are challenging the Big Fascists over the direction of U.S. imperialism. Since their interests are less tied to controlling the flow of oil, they are against heavy taxation to keep troops in the Middle East and in general oppose costly military bases and invasions. They're willing to rely on a smaller, whiter army, backed by nuclear weapons and the Air Force. They use open racism to build a political following.

Bella Ciao, Comrade Larry!

Larry was born on October 12, 1944 in Levittown, NY to parents who had been around the Communist Party. He liked sports and was a pitcher for the Division Ave High School baseball team. He got his BA in education from Harpur College and a teaching credential. After graduation he drove south, stopping in Gulfport, Mississippi. He asked about a teaching job, and the recruiter advised him against it since it was an all-Black school. Not to be deterred by racism, Larry taught math for a year. Moving west, he taught first at Pelton Junior High in San Francisco and then at Presidio. Once he made a lesson plan using the percentages of Kentucky miners who contracted black lung disease and the profits the bosses made from the workers' suffering. Other teachers followed his lesson plan in their classrooms. He also organized a multiracial group of young people to form a Little League team coached by three other young comrades and included his students in pick-up basketball games.

Fighting the KKK and Nazis

Larry fought racism by taking on the KKK and Nazis several times in the late 1970s and early 80s with Progressive Labor Party (PLP) and hundreds of workers and students. He was arrested in San Jose and a KKKop separated his shoulder. Possibly the biggest battle was organizing to stop a Nazi rally in Oxnard near Los Angeles. According to a veteran comrade: "When the cops attacked us, Larry came to my rescue. I couldn't run ... Larry grabbed my arm and literally ran me to safety...we took refuge on the steps of an apartment building. A man came out and insisted we come in so the cops couldn't arrest us. He gave us water and offered us food."

Larry later taught at Balboa High and then at Lincoln where he regularly took students for bowling and pizza on Saturdays. He developed a CHALLENGE network with other teachers while other comrades sold CHALLENGE and leafletted the students outside. He brought some of them to May Day in Los Angeles. He was elected to the teacher's union executive board and helped develop a left caucus. Larry always got CHALLENGE out to people

After a few years the caucus defeated the old leadership. One main issue was the need to fight racism in the school district. The union represented classified paraprofessionals who were mostly Black and Latin women with lower pay and benefits while the majority of the teachers were white. The caucus raised that struggles must build unity among all workers and students. They eventually won that paras would be covered under the same wage and benefit proposals as the teachers in contract fights.

Summer projects in Delano, Watsonville, and Mississippi

During the summer Larry almost always went to projects that PLP teachers organized with students. Some memorable ones were among Latin farmworkers in Delano and striking cannery workers in Watsonville. One summer, fighting the Klan in Mississippi, Comrade G remembers: "Larry and I went to Tupelo with the International Committee against Racism and PLP. It was a frightening time, and I was scared to death." Larry became one of the most influential people there. Thoughtful and calm, his presence helped the group focus and deal with problems as they arose. This was a powerful contribution."

Larry struggled with Bay Area comrades to "lead with CHALLENGE" and encouraged us to improve our distribution. He led by example by developing a CHALLENGE route, dropping papers off at houses of friends and coworkers, libraries, stores and coffee houses. He promoted involvement in mass organizations.

Sing, study and distribute CHALLENGE

Larry sang and played the piano and guitar. He and comrade L sang together at most May Day dinners. She was a member of the Rockin' Solidarity Labor Chorus and convinced Larry to join. He loved it! At rehearsals he distributed CHALLENGE during breaks. The Chorus was thrilled when Larry would take common songs and write parodies—and sometimes entire songs—to those tunes. These revisions were revolutionary and whimsical. One of the songs he wrote was "The Working Class" to the tune of "Amazing Grace."

More recently, Larry and other comrades formed a study group with members of the Chorus and from Larry's school. A highlight was the discussion of the 10 PLP principles of CHALLENGE. When people in the chorus were told about Larry's death, the director and some members talked about Larry's gift in writing songs—and that he, his wit, and his gift would be missed. One member of both the chorus and study group took over Larry's job of distributing CHALLENGE at Rainbow Coop Grocery. Larry also worked in HEAT, a group devoted to keeping SF City College as a community asset for the whole working class. When Larry's passing on July 11 was announced, many HEAT members praised his years of dedication to City College and as a fighter against racism.

Larry and his wife enjoyed ballroom dancing and traveling. He was proud of his son and two daughters and spoiled his seven grandchildren, five great grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

Despite his illness Larry struggled with and encouraged his comrades forward. He was a proud communist until the end.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Miners in Alabama ordered to pay for bosses' expenses

UMWA, 8/3–"This is a slap in the face not just to the workers who are fighting for better jobs at Warrior Met Coal, but to every worker who stands up to their boss anywhere in America," UMWA International President Cecil E. Roberts said. "There are charges for security, cameras, capital expenditures, buses for transporting scabs across picket lines, and the cost of lost production.

The union entered into a settlement agreement in June with NLRB Region 10 regarding charges the company had made about picket line activity...On July 22, the NLRB sent the union a detailed list of damages totaling $13.3 million dollars, more than 33 times the estimated amount NLRB lawyers had initially indicated would be assessed.

Warrior Met has reported millions of dollars in costs it has incurred over the course of the strike. "It appears that Warrior Met wants us to reimburse it for those costs, including costs it incurred before the strike even began," Roberts said. "What's extremely troubling here is that the NLRB appears to have taken up the company's cause without a second thought.

Justice non-existent in assassination of Moise

World Politics Review, 8/11–This weekend will mark the first anniversary of the Aug. 14 earthquake in Haiti, which came just five weeks after the assassination of former President Jovenel Moise... Moise was killed on July 7 last year, when a gang of assassins went into his heavily secured house in an upscale neighborhood of Port-au-Prince. The killers somehow managed to get through the scores of security personnel meant to be protecting a president who knew he had many enemies. Not one of the officers meant to be guarding Moise was hurt.

Haitian authorities have arrested scores of people, including 18 former Colombian soldiers, who are believed to have acted as mercenaries, carrying out the assassination on behalf of a paymaster. They have not gone on trial.

Among the main suspects is Ariel Henry, currently both Haiti's acting president and acting prime minister, but investigating a sitting prime minister under the current conditions is proving, shall we say, challenging. When officials have tried to question Henry, he has simply fired them. Other judges, prosecutors and witnesses have reportedly been threatened. Many, including the first judge investigating the case, have withdrawn from the investigation or gone into hiding. Another person of interest is Dimitri Herard, the current head of presidential security, who reportedly traveled to Colombia before the killing.

Anti-Muslim rapists and murderers released in India

BBC, 8/11–Bilkis Bano, who was gang-raped and saw 14 members of her family being murdered by a Hindu mob during the 2002 anti-Muslim riots in the western Indian state of Gujarat, is back in the headlines.

On Monday, 11 convicts who were serving life sentences for rape and murder in the case, walked out of prison to a heroes' welcome. In a late-night statement on Wednesday, Bilkis Bano called the decision to free the men "unjust" and said it had "shaken" her faith in justice.

"When I heard that the convicts who had devastated my family and life had walked free, I was bereft of words. I am still numb," she said…Many have also pointed out that the release is in contravention of guidelines issued by both the federal government and the Gujarat state government - both say that rape and murder convicts cannot be granted remission. Life terms in these crimes are usually served until death in India.

Workers' History

Harriet Tubman & John Brown, models of multiracial unity

The following article can be used in history and other humanities classes. This model of multiracial unity is a good foundation to set the tone for the school year.

This coming October 17 marks the 163nd anniversary of the raid on Harpers Ferry. It was a revolutionary revolt showing the need for militant, antiracist, multiracial, revolutionary struggle! The fight against racist terror continues with the re- bellions sparked by police murders this summer. As workers recognize the power of unity, the cops crack down harder on protests.

The southern enslaving class was terrified by the Harpers Ferry raiders' militant, multiracial unity, a real-life rebuke of their racist stereotyp- ing. One of the raiders' five Black freedom fight- ers, Osborne Anderson, described the atmosphere before-hand:

"I have been permitted to realize to its furthest, fullest extent, the moral, mental, physical, social harmony of an Anti-Slavery family, carrying out to the letter the principle of the Anti-slavery cause. In John Brown's house, and in John Brown's presence, men from widely different parts of the continent met and united into one company, wherein no hateful prejudice dared intrude its ugly self — no ghost of a distinction found space to enter."

From childhood, Brown vowed to fight slavery

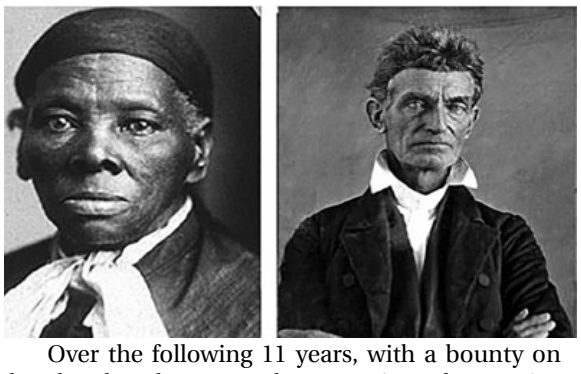
This trust among white and Black fighters did not happen overnight. John Brown's father was a conductor on the Underground Railroad in Ohio. At 12, Brown met a fugitive enslaved boy and saw the suffering slavery had inflicted on him, influencing Brown forever. He believed Black and white work- ers were completely equal. He put this knowledge into action daily.

As an adult, Brown moved his family to a farm in North Elba, N.Y. near a Black community of former enslaved workers. Black sisters and brothers were regularly invited to the house for dinner with Brown's family. He addressed them as "Mr." or "Mrs.," sharply contrasting with the era's racist mores (true even among many slavery opponents).

Preparing for the raid, Brown turned to both Black and white abolitionists. In April 1858, while gathering money, arms and volunteers in Canada, he visited Harriet Tubman. She was well-known to the Black fugitive slave community there, having personally guided many to freedom. Tubman sup- ported his plans, urging him to set July 4, 1858, for the raid and promising to bring volunteers. They agreed to communicate through their mutual friend Frederick Douglass, reaching out to Black abolitionist and former enslaved workers.

Tubman single-handedly freed 300 enslaved workers

Tubman's own experiences made her and Brown allies. Born around 1820 to enslaved par- ents on a Maryland plantation, Tubman performed house and field work, was subjected to physical abuse and tearfully saw many of her nine siblings sold away from the family. In her teens, Tubman suffered a broken skull from brutal plantation life. Her "owner" tried selling her as "damaged goods." Instead she fled, walking for several weeks, mostly at night, the 90 miles to Philadelphia via the Un- derground Railroad. She returned shortly after- wards, guiding her family out of slavery to Canada. And that was just the beginning.



Over the following 11 years, with a bounty on her head, Tubman made approximately 13 trips south and guided an estimated 300 enslaved workers to freedom in Canada. This resolute, daring revolutionary declared, "I never ran my train off the tracks and I never lost a passenger."Tubman warmly endorsed Brown's armed struggles in Kan- sas against the pro-slavery gangs. Brown, in turn, knew Tubman's courage, militancy, and knowledge of the land and Underground Railroad network, and felt Tubman would be invaluable in executing their plans to free the enslaved by any means nec- essary. He always addressed her as "General Tub- man." Both believed in direct action and armed violence to end slavery.

Tubman became ill and could not bring her forces to Harpers Ferry, but her work inspired the rest of the raiders. Tubman's example, like that of Osborne Anderson and the other Black raiders, discredited the image of Black people as passive victims, terrifying the southern enslavers and poli- ticians, and inspired the abolitionist movement.

Black rebels petrified slave-owners

To those today who say workers won't fight oppression, the stubborn facts of history show struggle is universal. The slave-owners, although talking of "docile" Black workers, knew this well. They were petrified of potential Black rebels and of "outside agitators." They patrolled all night with dogs and guns to intimidate their enslaved work- ers and to keep Yankees and abolitionist literature away from them.

Today the "outside agitators" are Progressive Labor Party (PLP) communists, fighting to abolish racist capitalism. The bosses assure us that the impoverished working class is too ground down, too alienated to fight back collectively, saying workers hate communism. Yet they organize cops, plant security, the Minutemen, Black nationalists and sellout union "leaders" to try to keep communists out, and instantly fire them when they're discov- ered in a factory. Why are they afraid if the working class is supposed to be so passive?

Today, uniting to fight the mutual class enemy is one of the main ways people of different backgrounds are able to overcome the "natural" seg- regation capitalist society promotes. Brown and Tubman demonstrated that racist and nationalist ideas cannot be overcome primarily inside one's head. It requires material change in the way one lives. Among the Black and militant white aboli- tionists, multiracial unity developed over years of working together, getting to know each other while struggling over their differences.

Today, U.S. capitalism has created its own contradiction. Workers still often live in neighborhoods separated by "race" but many are integrated within their workplaces and schools. The bosses try to divide us there as well, with racist job clas- si- fications and different types of bourgeois culture to keep workers apart (e.g., soul "versus" country music). Nevertheless, workers rub shoulders every day. Class-conscious workers in PLP must develop these acquaintances into friendships and unbreakable bonds in struggle.

Class struggle trumps racism

As in Tubman and Brown's time, racism permeates society. But rebellions and strikes reveal multiracial unity and struggle against the bosses. At the Smithfield Ham Factory in Tarheel, NC, for example, a 15-year unionization fight witnessed intense intimidation from the bosses to scare workers from signing union cards. But by organizing support from grocery workers from far and wide, Smithfield workers felt part of a larger community. When the bosses got immigration agents to raid the plant, targeting Latin workers for deportation, the workers saw through this divisive trick and, in November 2006, 500 marched out in a two-day strike protesting this raid, forcing the company to rehire all the fired immigrant workers!

In 2008 in the Bronx, NY, the Stella D'Oro workers went on strike for 11 months. These immigrant workers from across the world, men and women, overcame differences and stuck together. Not one worker crossed the picket line! PLP had organized friends, comrades, teachers and students onto the picket lines, bringing solidarity and communist leadership. PLP members steadfastly stood in solidarity with the strikers via donations, rallies and marches, and supported their fight against plant closure. The fight against police brutality is a protracted class war still being waged today. It is the same war left unfinished by Tubman and Brown. This summer PLP joined the militant anti- racist fightback against the kkkops, who in less than a year's time, stole the lives of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Jacob Blake, and countless others The multiracial character of these protests are glimmers of the revolutionary potential of the working class.

John Brown's raid and Harriet Tubman's courage in freeing 300 slaves along the Underground Railroad teach us many lessons that hold valuable to the for antiracists. First, Militancy was foremost in their thinking. Tubman declared she would never return to being a slave, that she would rather die fighting. Brown, after fighting in Kansas, real- ized that only bloodshed could end slavery. Many workers agreed with them, especially after the 1857 Dred Scott decision legalizing slavery nation-wide.

The second is that Multiracial unity is essential in any fight. Black workers escaping from enslavement received needed help from white abolitionists to reach the North. Thousands of workers,

Black and white, helped escaping slaves along their journeys and defended them when attacked by slave-catchers. These workers attended public meetings, donated money, passed word to their friends and helped harbor fugitive slaves.

PLP does similar things today. We discuss po- litical struggles and the vital need for multiracial unity against the racist system with friends, cow- orkers and neighbors. We urge them to join in militant antiracist demonstrations, build a multi- racial base with fellow workers or donate to CHAL- LENGE. Every time someone we know does one of these simple acts, they're making a political com- mitment in the fight against racism, capitalism and imperialism, just as thousands of anti-slavery porters did

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CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons. The next deadline is the **Friday evening of September 2.** Send to desafio.challenge@gmail.com. For some guidance and house style rules, please go to www.bit.ly/338ZJow

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